

Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election is a clear example of why it is dangerous to let the US media consolidate under the umbrella of just a few (three) major corporations.

The public airwaves are just that: they are public and belong to the American people. The corporations, like Sinclair Broadcasting, use those public airwaves absolutely free of charge. As a result, they are obligated by broadcasting ethics and by law to serve the interests of the public.

However, when a few large corporations can control major portions of the airwaves, they give us what's good for their profit margins instead of what is good for the American people and our endangered democracy. As a result they will tend to give their captive audiences corporate interpretations of the news and ignore local issues involving real people from our local communities. They will also tend to "dumb down" the news and avoid the more substantial and important issues that matter.

Sinclair's blatant propaganda effort just before an election shows one of the many reasons we need to make the media ownership rules much stronger and stop the slide toward weaker rules: the license renewal process should never be automatic and should certainly require that media owners earn the right to use the public airwaves by clearly demonstrating how they serve the public interests of true objectivity and balance.

Sincerely,

JD Brown